

In the morning it was “Soldier! How would you like your eggs?”

At night it was “Soldier! Would you like your bed made up now?”

That was the way New Jersey’s Marines of the 21st Battalion of Dover and Bayonne went to the West Coast and possible war service a few weeks ago.

The boys had Pullman cars all the way out to Camp Pendleton, Cal., with one man to a bunk and new, clean sheets and pillow cases every night. Meals were equal to those served regular Pullman passengers, service was excellent, there was no KP and no other details except a little guard duty.

The special attention received by the New Jersey leathernecks was due in a large measure to Capt. George Anderson of Wharton, the operations officer of the 21st Battalion. Capt. Anderson pointed out to railroad officials that regulations of the Marine Corps call for Pullman service on long runs and, he also pointed out, a trip of 3,200 miles, taking four days, is a long run. Regardless of how things worked, the Marines traveled in style and the trip cost the Federal government \$70,460 for the train fare and \$9,420 more for meals.

Life aboard the troop train on the four-day trip across the continent was pretty much routine. The boys got up at 6:30 A.M. and after washing up and shaving, with towels furnished by the railroad, they ate breakfast in shifts, with officers eating last.

Card playing, singing, reading and letter writing kept their attention until lunch time when the trek to the two dining cars started again. During afternoons the boys did quite a bit of sleeping, went back to their card games or just looked out the windows, watching the rest of the world go by.

On Sunday so many boys expressed the wish to go to church that special arrangements were made so that every man could attend. The Pullman conductor wired the station master at El Paso and when the train arrived Protestant services were held in the baggage room. Lt. Joseph W. Fitzpatrick of Clifton, nephew of Rev. Harold V. Fitzpatrick of St. Bridget’s Church, Jersey City, led Roman Catholics in recitation of the rosary.

The 21st lost its identity within 30 minutes after it landed at Camp Pendleton and some of the boys started to move. By this time more have undoubtedly moved. Marines don’t stay in one place long. That’s a way of the Corps.